

**2. Central Registry Bill 2018 –
First Reading approved**

Mr Crookall to move:

That the Central Registry Bill 2018 be read a first time.

The President: We turn to Item 2, the Central Registry Bill 2018 for First Reading. Hon. Member of Council, Mr Crookall, to move.

Mr Crookall: Thank you, Mr President.

I am pleased to be before you today to present the Central Registry Bill 2018. The Bill formally establishes the Central Registry as part of the Department for Enterprise and transfers a number of functions to it from the General Registry.

The Bill has its beginning in the Council of Ministers' response to the Scope of Government Report 2012 which required:

all Departments, Statutory Boards and Offices to review all service delivery functions by 31st December 2013, looking at all options for alternative means of service delivery and proposing suitable options after due consideration of a sound business case and the needs of the people they serve.

In 2014 the Government's Business Change Steering Group accepted proposals from the General Registry to restructure the General Registry by splitting its Courts and Tribunals services from its Registry functions. The intention was to enable a strategic approach to the Registry functions which are clearly separate from the administration of justice functions which rest with the judiciary.

It was agreed by the Business Change Steering Group that the Registry functions be transferred to the then Department of Economic Development where they could be combined with the Companies Registry. The transfer of functions from one Government Department to another is normally achieved through secondary legislation. However, as the General Registry is not established by the Government Departments Act 1987 its functions can only be transferred via primary legislation.

While appropriate primary legislation was drafted and a slot was found on the legislative programme, the Business Change Steering Group recommended that, in the meantime, the Department assume responsibility for the functions from April 2015 by delegation from the General Registry. Since then, the Department has had operational responsibility for the Land Registry, Deeds and Probate Registry, Civil Registry and Public Record Office and for a number of other functions previously carried out by the General Registry.

The principal purpose of the Central Registry Bill 2018 is to put the Department for Enterprise's responsibility for these functions on a statutory footing. It provides for the creation of a Central Registry as part of the Department, comprising the Companies Registry, the Land Registry, Deeds and Probate Registry, Civil Registry and Public Record Office. In addition it transfers a number of other functions such as responsibility for the Charities Register and the Register of Political Parties.

The Bill also includes a number of minor amendments to legislation to ensure that it reflects changes in practice which have occurred as a result of other governmental restructuring and changes in working practices, especially those driven by technological change.

The Bill establishes the office of the Registrar General. This officer, who will be a member of the staff of the Department for Enterprise, will be responsible for managing the functions of the Central Registry, an office of the Government separate from the General Registry.

The Central Registry's main premises are referred to in the Bill as the Principal Registry. Information for which the Registrar General is responsible is to be accessible there, either in physical or electronic format. It should be noted, however, that this does not override any

particular requirement that information held by the Registrar General is only to be accessible to particular people or in particular circumstances. For example, sensitive personal information held by the new Registry, about gender recognition changes or adoptions will still only be accessible to certain people in certain circumstances.

The General Registry retains its functions in respect of the courts and tribunals. It is understood that on completion of the transfer the General Registry will look to bring forward further legislation to address issues with the General Registry Act 1965 and its remaining functions associated with Courts and Tribunals.

Mr President, I beg to move that the Central Registry Bill 2018 be read for the first time.

The President: Mrs Poole-Wilson.

Mrs Poole-Wilson: Thank you, Mr President.

I beg to second and reserve my remarks.

The President: Hon. Members, I put the motion that the Central Registry Bill be read for the first time. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.